

Greenway Committee Meeting Summary

Dec. 21, 2021

Present: Trish Garrigan, Sherry Anders, Marie Elwyn, Betsy Colburn-Mirkovic

Absent: Brian Goldberg

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 6:34pm.
2. **Announcements** – Sarah Widing from the Planning Board couldn't be here this time as planned but will come on Jan. 18th and discuss the Housing Production Plan. Then Sherry read the usual announcement about recording.
3. **Land Management/Acquisition** –
 - a. Great Rd/2A parcels – Sherry needs to talk to Mike McGovern about these to let him know about the ecological significance of these Mulpus Brook parcels, as we know Fish and Wildlife is interested in them.
 - b. Goddard – the new owner of the Farrar property near Little Turnpike (22 acres) has a conservation interest in the property and is open to working with the Town, which is undevelopable and in a well protection area – Sherry will be in touch after the holidays about an adjacent 5-acre piece owned by another Farrar. Marie noted knowing one of the beneficiaries and said she will be approaching him about naming a sidewalk after his grandfather (Ray Farrar). Sherry noted the possibility of moving forward on a LAND grant.
 - c. Property off Center Road across from Valley Farm. The Field family bought 36 acres that were separated from the larger parcel with the Hip-Roofed House on it, which was historically owned by Ethel Bolton, author of "Shirley Uplands and Intervales." This ecologically important land could have been developed into approx. 8 house lots, but will remain conserved, the Fields are working with the North County Land Trust.
4. **Housing Production Plan (HPP)** – will be discussed in January with Sarah. Betsy and Trish gave a brief review of the work they did to compare parcels listed in the HPP for potential housing with conservation concerns. They shared a memo where they identified 8 of the 24 parcels listed in Appendix 1 of the HPP that the Greenway committee might suggest **not** be used for housing due to conservation concerns, and gave recommendations for considering other parcels, such as access to Town water and sewer.
5. **Conservation Restrictions (CR)** – Sherry noted that Mike Fleming said there is research and recording of CR's needed on 4 prior development projects, and wondered if we could help. Betsy noted that CR's on developed land do not always have conservation value and our time would be better focused if we looked into the CR's with high conservation value that need work. Betsy also noted that these are private lands and we would need to contact landowners and get authorization to get on the land. Sherry reported that a summer intern did a lot of work for the town on CR's and has a map and folder for each property. Sherry will let Mike know we are most interested in the CR's with conservation

value and could he get us a list of the ones he thinks have the most value. We are interested in helping him in a way that makes sense for our committee, given other priorities. Trish expressed some interest in getting volunteers to help with the annual review of CR properties but needs to learn more about what is required.

Mike Fleming sent an email asking if the committee would be interested in creating a Conservation Restriction Landowner Handbook. It was decided that other projects needed to be prioritized; good handbooks already exist and can serve as references.

6. **Fredonian Nature Center – ADA Grant.** Continued discussion about need for an Invasive Management Plan. Sherry noted that work on invasives is needed to meet ADA accreditation requirements. Should we try for an NRWA grant to do an invasive species management plan? Pepperrell recently got a grant to establish a group to manage invasive species in town, we could model our grant after theirs. Sherry will talk to the Pepperrell Conservation Agent to see what they did. Marie and Susan Gilham from the Conservation Commission are looking at options to minimize herbicide use for one of their projects, there may be some potential to collaborate. Betsy suggested we contact the Ecological Landscaping Alliance (ELA) for resources. There is still the issue of getting local people involved – hard to do. Bemis might do a volunteer program, but town people would be more sustainable if we had some interested.
7. **Forest Legacy Project** – Sherry reported it was endorsed by the State, moving forward to the Federal level.
8. **Barrens Restoration Project** – There is a delay in Mass Wildlife’s anticipated start date, no action needed at this time.
9. **OSRP Update** – Sherry reported in Brian’s absence. Progress is being made. Jen McGuinness is working on maps. Community survey is nearly complete. Brian plans to network with members of other Boards and Committees. Trish suggested Brian or the OSRP team could use the old Action Plan to highlight where various other boards are needed when they do this outreach. Other discussion: should we tie discussion of the CPA with the Benjamin Hill developments? More 40b’s could be coming. Trish to check with Ayer town planner. We should also check the recommendation section of the NRWA Stewardship Plan
10. **Shirley Trails** – The need for one town map with all the trails on it was noted. The MRPC maps have not been updated. Trish offered to talk to Paul Funch of Groton Trails to see how they got their town wide trail map done. Maybe trails should be emphasized more in the new OSRP?
11. **Public Engagement** – Newsletter Winter issue - interview with Marion Stoddart. Newsletter might be out the third week in January. Get Sherry any other ideas for articles. She does an amazing job.
12. **Committee Member Comments** – none

13. Public Comments – none

14. Approval of Minutes – A motion to approve the May 4th and May 18th minutes with 2 small changes noted by Betsy, Motion Passed. Motion to approve the Nov. 16, 2021 minutes was passed.

15. Adjourned at 8:05pm.